

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 204827
ORIGIN AF-10

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DRAFTED BY: AF/E:GWSCOTT:PS

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-----081743Z 083955 /40

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

UNCLAS STATE 104827

E.O. 11652: N/A

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION DIA WASHDC INFO CNO, COMNAVINTCOM
CINCUSNAVEUR, USCINCEUR, FICEURLANT, EUDAC STUTTGART GER,
COMIDEASTFOR, USDAO ADDIS ABABA, CINCPACFLT FROM USDAO/PARIS
281728Z APR 77. REPEATED INFO CMC WASHDC, CSAF WASHDC, CNO
WASHDC, CSA WASHDC, CIA, SECSTATE WASHDC FROM JCS 282122Z APR 77:

QUOTE UNCLAS 12529

SUBJECT: THIS IS IR 6 832 0254 77

1. FRANCE (FR), SOMALIA (SO)
2. 6 832 0254 77
3. SOMALIAN MIG ATTACKS FRENCH PATROL AIRCRAFT
4. N/A
5. 770427
6. 770428
7. 770428 PARIS, FRANCE
8. INITIATIVE
9. B-2
10. USDAO PARIS, FRANCE
11. NO
12. J. B. TOWNSEND, LT COL, USMC, A/ALUSNA

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13. L. E. BOLDUC, JR., BG, USA, DEFENSE ATTACHE
14. FRENCH MEDIA
15. NON-DIRC
22. FRENCH WIRE SERVICE, RADIO AND T.V. ON 27 APR 77
CARRIED A REPORT OF A SOMALIAN MIG-17 ATTACKING A
FRENCH NAVY ATLANTIC MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT OVER THE
GULF OF ADEN ON 25 MAR 77. FRANCE'S PRESTIGIOUS

"NEWSPAPER OF RECORD", LE MONDE, CARRIED AN UNSIGNED ARTICLE IN THEIR 28 APR 77 EDITION WHICH IS SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS: THE GOF ADDRESSED A COMPLAINT TO THE SOMALIA GOVERNMENT AFTER AN AERIAL INCIDENT LAST MONTH BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE GULF OF ADEN. IN THE LATE MORNING OF 25 MARCH A SOMALIAN MIG-17 MADE SEVERAL FIRING PASSES WITH ITS CANNONS AT A DJIBOUTI BASED FRENCH NAVY BREGUET-ATLANTIC. THE ATLANTIC SUCCESSFULLY EVADED EACH FIRING PASS AND NO CREW MEMBERS WERE INJURED.

THE INCIDENT WAS NOT REVEALED IMMEDIATELY DUE TO AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS NOT TO ANNOUNCE THE INCIDENT. A SIMILAR INCIDENT HAD ALREADY HAPPENED BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WHEN A SOMALIAN MISSILE PATROL BOAT OPENED FIRE ON A FRENCH ESCORT VESSEL CRUISING CLOSE TO SOCOTRA ISLAND. THE 25 MAR INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN THE VICINITY OF BAR-EL-MANDEB STRAITS ABOUT 19 NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE SOMALIAN COAST. THE ATLANTIC WAS ON AN ASW PATROL MISSION IN COMPANY WITH A FRENCH NAVY NEPTUNE P-2V7 PATROL AIRCRAFT. WITHOUT ANY WARNING THE MIG-17 OPENED FIRE ON THE ATLANTIC WHO DROPPED TO 150 METERS ABOVE THE SEA TO ESCAPE. THE ATTACK LASTED 10 MINUTES AS THE MIG-17 MADE SIX FIRING PASSES. DUE TO EVASIVE MANEUVERS THE BREGUET-ATLANTIC WAS NOT HIT. A SOVIET ALLIGATOR CRUISING IN THE GULF RIGHT BELOW THE ATLANTIC WAS STRAFED BY THE SOMALIAN MIG'S FIRE. THIS WAS THE FIRST GRAVE INCIDENT BETWEEN FRANCE AND SOMALIA IN CONNECTION WITH THE EX-UNCLASSIFIED

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TENSION OF TERRITORIAL WATERS. IN THAT AREA FRANCE RECOGNIZES A 12 NAUTICAL MILE LIMIT. THE GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA RECENTLY EXTENDED THEIR TERRITORIAL LIMIT TO 200 N.M. COUNTRIES BORDERING THE GULF CONSIDER THE SOMALIAN GOVT 200 N.M. LIMIT A UNILATERAL DECISION SINCE THIS EXTENSION BLOCKS ALL MARITIME AND AIR TRAFFIC IN THE GULF OF ADEN AND THE GOF CONSIDERED THE ATLANTIC TO BE OVER INTERNATIONAL WATERS. THE 25 MARCH INCIDENT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE GOF SENDING THE CARRIER CLEMENCEAU TO THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE CLEMENCEAU DEPARTED TOULON 5 APR 77, REACHED DJIBOUTI ON 15 APR AND WILL STAY UNTIL JUNE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE REFERENDUM FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE GOVT OF SOMALIA ENGAGED ONE OF HER OLDEST AIRCRAFT AGAINST THE ATLANTIC SINCE SHE HAS ALSO RECEIVED MIG-19'S AND MIG-21'S FROM THE USSR.

COMMENT: 1. THE STORY WAS ATTRIBUTED TO "A VERY GOOD SOURCE" WHICH THE EMBASSY PRESS OFFICE BELIEVES TO BE

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

2. THE INCIDENT HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN CONFIRMED BY A
SENIOR FRENCH NAVAL OFFICER WHO STATED THAT THE NEPTUNE
REMAINED AT A HIGH ALTITUDE AND INFORMED THE ATLANTIC
OF THE MIG-17'S WHEREABOUTS AND CALLED OUT THE TIME TO
TURN AWAY. UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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